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LABOUR ORGANISER

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THE LABOUR PARTY REQUIRES TWO ORGANISING ASSISTANTS FOR GLASGOW AND MANCHESTER AREAS RESPECTIVELY

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THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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PRICE FIVEPENCE

Local Elections are Over

BY the time this issue of the *Labour Organiser* appears the local elections will be over. Successful candidates will be resting on their laurels; unsuccessful candidates will be finding reasons for their defeat; agents will be preparing to submit their Return of Election Expenses; and local parties will be wondering where the money is to come from to pay the bills.

It will be a great pity if the ending of the local election campaign is regarded by many local parties as the end of their public activity for some months. Though the electorate usually are apathetic about local elections, party workers put in a great deal of work and a considerable amount of information is gathered about supporters and opponents and how they polled.

This information will be lost for ever if it is not collected immediately from the wards and polling districts. It should be transferred at once to the marked register in the possession of the Constituency Labour Party, and should be used in any membership drive now being planned.

The coming of longer days and better weather makes the next few months the most suitable for doorstep work. The immediate need of the Party is to recruit from its supporters new members, and from these new

members to find the workers needed to extend Party activity up to the General Election and to man the machine when the General Election comes.

The activities referred to elsewhere in this issue can only be undertaken if there are sufficient people willing to do their bit. Since 1952 the number of active workers has declined and so has Labour Party membership. Recent experience shows that past members are willing to rejoin and new supporters to enrol, if they are approached to do so.

More important, a substantial number of collectors and other workers has been found from newly recruited members where the local organisation has made a serious effort to increase its active personnel.

Membership Figures

Though final figures are not yet available, it looks as if last year's membership campaign stopped the downward trend of recent years, and it may be that individual membership for 1956 will show a small increase over the figure for the previous year.

Unfortunately, progress has been by no means consistent. While some Constituency Labour Parties report a substantial increase (and one recruited over 1,000 new members), others show a fall; similarly, some regions have done better than others.

Some credit for increased membership must go to the newly appointed organising assistants and agents. But generally, increases

(Continued on page 86)

GETTING THOSE POSTAL VOTES

by C. J. Hillam

THE postal vote and removals have sometimes been described as an election refinement, but be that as it may, it produces votes and so often can and does secure a winning margin.

For this reason alone, we must exploit its possibilities to the full, not grudgingly, but with an appreciation of their real value.

Continuing Task

Having said that, one must not underestimate the difficulties of obtaining registration for the postal vote; in many cases it takes several hours of endeavour to secure one vote; but this need not 'tie down' many workers at election times, indeed, it should be a continuing task between elections.

Our first concern is to obtain information of people who might be eligible for the postal vote facilities. We need 'observers', and the more we can obtain the greater the field of observation and the chances of success.

This, then, is a task in which all Party members can engage given (a) they are made aware in a broad sense of the information required from them, and (b) some easy means of communicating this information is made available to them.

Secondly, we need to follow up on the information 'observed'. We want to be sure that these are grounds for registration, and more important still, that the person concerned will vote Labour.

It is not our task to have a ballot paper placed into the hands of someone who would use their vote against us, and this indeed is just what we do if we register non-supporters.

The Follow-up

What, then, is involved in a follow up? First it means a visit to the person concerned. If the claim is by reason of occupation, then we need only to get the appropriate form (R.P.F. 7) signed and forwarded to the Electoral Registration Officer.

However, many cases concern those who are temporarily ill or permanently incapacitated, and this is often much more involved. You will know that for this type of claim, not only must the applicant sign the R.P.F. 7, but the certificate must be completed by a doctor.

Often the person either cannot or is unwilling to visit their doctor for this purpose,

and so the responsibility of securing the doctor's signature is ours.

In some cases this may be obtained by a visit to the doctor, in others we have to employ more subtle strategy. This may involve typing a letter to the doctor, getting it signed by the applicant, and forwarding it to the doctor with a stamped and addressed (to the applicant) reply envelope.

Is this worth while? Of course it is; and with a little forethought it will only involve two visits instead of the one.

Thirdly, we must be sure that those who receive their ballot paper by post, as a result of our efforts, know how to, and indeed do, use the facilities provided. It is fatal to assume that this will automatically take place.

Many, particularly elderly people, are confused by printed instructions and so votes are lost. In a recent by-election, one in every sixteen postal votes was declared invalid.

Chasing Removals

The problem of removals is much akin to that of the postal vote. Again, the important thing is to receive and act on the information concerning removals. It may well be that the initial information is simply that a person or family has moved.

In such instances, our first duty is to endeavour to discover just where the elector has moved to. Neighbours can often help; sometimes it is the new resident; it may be the milkman or insurance agent or the 'shop on the corner', and perseverance is frequently rewarded.

In a large borough it is reasonable to assume that a good proportion of the removals will be within the borough, but possibly in other constituencies. In a small borough, a greater proportion of the removals will be to other boroughs, although perhaps quite near at hand.

Here we must note that a removal within a borough does not qualify for a postal vote. In such a case, it is a question of canvass and the provision of transport facilities.

In other cases the removal may be to another borough but near enough to make the act of canvass a comparatively easy one.

This also may prove to be a 'transportable removal'. Indeed, the information may well be obtained too late to act on for obtaining a postal vote, and arrangements for trans-

port on polling day is the way to deal with such removals.

In all cases, however, the question of canvass is the first step; the others follow only if we are sure that we are working to secure a Labour vote, which is the function of our machinery.

Doesn't Qualify

One must also bear in mind that a removal does not qualify for a postal vote in local government elections. This qualification only applies to Parliamentary elections.

It is, therefore, essential in local government elections that all removals within reasonable transportable distance are sought out and provided with the means of trans-

port. To ignore this potential vote could be costly in many instances.

It is important to remember and to stress in connection with the postal vote and removals that all votes so obtained are those which in all probability would otherwise be lost to the Party. It is also important to note that many so registered are permanent additions to the absent voters register.

The hundreds you can obtain are thus additional to what would otherwise be the Labour vote—it is not difficult to see what a difference this would make in many of the marginal seats.

This, then, is a challenge to us all. Are we ready and prepared to meet it?

The Register an Encyclopædia

Suggests R. E. BREWER

THE Electoral Register is the basic instrument of our electoral work. Some regard each new production of the register as virgin material and the accumulated knowledge, secured by sweat and toil and indicated on previous registers, is discarded.

This happens despite the fact that in any given polling district, ward or constituency there is a basic Labour or Tory vote—people who, whatever the political situation, will record a vote for their own Party.

This policy is followed because usually there is no real conception of what a marked register is or how it should be used.

The 'marked register', either in the form of coloured markings on the register itself, on index cards, or in some other form, is a logical way in which to develop electoral work particularly if we accept the fact of 'basic' votes.

Even if there were no other reason for its existence, a marked register is absolutely necessary for the proper conduct of postal voting and removal work.

Most marked registers will, of course, contain much more than an indication of the basic 'Tory' and 'Labour' voters. They will also show the promised Labour support and the declared Tories, plus known abstainers. (Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance, never vote.)

A really good marked register will become much more than just a bare indication of Labour and Tory support. It ought, in fact,

to become what could be described as 'An Encyclopædia of Electoral Information'. This would grow by extending our markings to record the following facts:

- (a) Households that display our window bill;
- (b) Postal and Proxy voters;
- (c) Removals; and, of course,
- (d) Party members.

It is essential that we should realise that the marked register is not static but something which is growing all the time, for it is possible to add to it almost daily.

In addition to the information about removals and postal votes, a considerable amount of information can be gleaned from the local Press, particularly in reports of deaths and marriages, and the correspondence columns often reveal diehard Tory supporters.

CANVASS INFORMATION

A considerable amount of information can be picked up on membership canvasses. Immediately the 'B' List is issued, it should be canvassed, so that when the new register is issued, information can be transferred to it. In all sorts of ways, information will come to hand and can be recorded.

The marked register is not to be regarded as a substitute for electoral canvassing, but it does enable us to be more selective. We can start off our canvass on known support, doubtfuls and 'unknowns', moving on to the Tories at a later stage of the election campaign.

Many agents have found it useful as a

'persuader' and an introduction to canvassing to be able to say to new people, 'Here are certain known Labour supporters—we want you just to go and remind them the election is on and obtain a promise of their vote.' Very often this has removed the fear of canvassing which affects so many people.

The marked register will also be our guide to where we ought to expect a display of our support in terms of window bills, and places where we are weak and to which special attention must be given. An advanced use of the marked register could be a specially directed appeal for election help to *known supporters* as distinct from members.

A list of Labour markings is an invaluable aid to membership recruitment, as it is obvious that this is most fertile ground on which to work. Special propaganda can be directed to them, for we must never forget the need to educate the Labour voter in our own ideas and ideology.

SOCIAL VALUE

Many parties have used their marked register to sell tickets for dances, bazaars and lotteries, to supporters, and to otherwise gain assistance for Party work.

There is little doubt that much of the value of the marked register is lost unless it is a central register. It is, after all, from the central body of the party that decisions must be made about direction of activity.

Postal voting and removal administration can only be properly conducted by a central officer. It must be possible for comparison to be able to be made as between one area and another as to postal voters, removals, unknowns, membership, etc. Obviously, all this information must be immediately observable and this is only possible with a central marked register.

Wards ought to be encouraged to keep and take an interest in the marked register. From time to time comparisons can be made between ward and central markings in order to keep up-to-date.

Summed up, a marked register is:

- (a) *Essential for proper conduct of postal vote and removal work;*
- (b) *Should contain all relevant information available;*
- (c) *Should be kept centrally, though there is an advantage in wards having copies also;*
- (d) *Should be used to direct Party effort; and*
- (e) *Is a 'live' register to which amendment is constantly being made.*

(Continued from page 83)

have taken place where there is already a substantial membership and the decreases, in most cases, are where for many years the local parties have been content to carry on with few members.

It seems fairly certain that there will be no General Election this year, but who can say what will happen in 1958? That is why during the remainder of 1957, membership recruitment must be pressed forward, along with the compilation of complete electoral records.

Only with a big membership and a detailed knowledge of the electoral position in each constituency can the Labour Party face the prospects of a General Election with confidence of victory.

SITUATION VACANT

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL. Applications invited for post of Administrative Secretary to Socialist International. Good knowledge of English, French and German essential. Salary £1,250-£1,500. The post is pensionable. Application forms from the Chairman of the Socialist International, Morgan Phillips, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1.

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**THE LABOUR PARTY
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In recent years there has been confusion about the law relating to the disqualification of candidates for Parliament. LEN SIMS explains the new Bill

Who can't become an M.P.

A BILL "... to make provision for disqualifying the holders of specified offices for membership of the House of Commons, and to repeal the enactments providing for the disqualification of the holders of offices or places of profit under the Crown, and other offices ..." has passed through Parliament and now awaits Royal Assent.

So ends, it is hoped, the confusing and often pettifogging restrictions surrounding membership of the House of Commons. No longer need candidates worry as to whether their membership of this or that committee is considered to be an office or place of profit under the Crown.

When it is realised that two of the many Acts governing membership of the Commons are The House of Commons (Disqualification) Act of 1693 and The Succession of the Crown Act, 1707, it is obvious that action had to be taken. It is upon the rock of the Act of 1707 that many Members' hopes have foundered.

NEW PERSPECTIVE

The growth and responsibility of the central government has extended over the years and, especially since 1945, the social services, the nationalised industries, and the considerable financial assistance given to local authorities, have expanded to the point where the principle 'none that receive payment from the State can legislate for it' just had to be put into present-day perspective.

It is only necessary to cast one's mind back to the 1955 General Election to realise how far (and to what ridiculous lengths) these old Acts were interpreted. Immediately following the General Election, Mr. J. C. George (Member for Pollok), Sir Roland Jennings (Member for Hallam) and Mr. C. A. Howell (Member for Perry Barr), were found to hold disqualifying offices and it was necessary to introduce Validation of Election Bills in order that they retain their seats.

In the case of Sir Roland Jennings, it was

held that his disqualification arose from the fact that, in order to audit the accounts of a club of which he was a member (and so save fees), he had to be a 'public auditor' and, by his doing so, disqualified himself!

The case of Mr. Howell was just as absurd. He was appointed—a few months prior to his election to the House—to two panels under the National Insurance Acts. Mr. Howell never received payment in respect of these appointments as he did not actually sit. It was by his being summoned to a meeting that raised the matter in his own mind. Nevertheless, he was deemed to hold a disqualifying office.

INTERESTING CASE

Perhaps the most interesting case is that of Mr. Charles Beattie, who was declared elected for the controversial constituency of Mid Ulster. In the General Election, Mr. Beattie was defeated by a Sinn Féin candidate, Mr. Thomas Mitchell, by the narrow majority of 260. As Mr. Mitchell was serving a prison sentence for treason-felony, the House of Commons declared him to be ineligible for membership and a fresh election was ordered.

Both candidates stood and again Mr. Mitchell was elected—this time with an increased majority. However, a successful election petition was taken out by Mr. Beattie on the grounds that the electors were fully aware of Mr. Mitchell's ineligibility to sit as a Member of the House of Commons and, therefore, votes cast for him were 'thrown away'.

The crowning point came when Mr. Beattie was found to be disqualified for membership, owing to his appointments to an Agricultural Committee and two National Insurance Tribunals. In his case the Select Committee could not recommend a Validation Bill, as the question of disqualification must have been an issue in the by-election. Further, the House of Commons had commenced considering the present Bill. Mr. Beattie did not contest the ensuing by-election.

IRRITATING ANOMALY

Another irritating anomaly concerned the teaching profession. Apparently it is possible for a teacher in a county borough to be

elected and sit but not those employed by the county council.

The new Bill sets out to cut through this tangle of some 117 Acts (41 passed since 1945) which contain reference to membership of the House of Commons. Set out in clear terms are those who are disqualified; briefly, they are holders of paid judicial office (including some Recorders), civil servants (whole- or part-time), members of the regular Forces, the police, and members of any legislature outside the Commonwealth, together with appointees to commissions, tribunals, etc. All are listed in the Schedules.

In addition to the above disqualifying offices, there are also offices which disqualify a person for a particular constituency of constituencies. For instance, a member of a County Agricultural Executive, Sub-Committee, or District Committee, cannot sit for any constituency comprising whole or even part of the area for which the Executive acts.

Similarly, a Recorder for a municipal borough, having its own court of quarter sessions, is debarred from representing a constituency which forms part of the city or borough for which he is appointed.

MINISTERS' PAY

In order to ensure that Ministers of the Crown can receive a salary, special provision is made in the Bill and the number of persons is limited to a maximum of 70 persons in all (27 being listed in a Schedule). In the event of the number exceeding the greatest number entitled to sit and vote in the Commons, only those who were appointed before the maximum was reached can sit or vote until the number has been reduced.

The long established tradition that a person, on being elected to the House of Commons, cannot resign, has been continued. A special section establishes the stewardship of Chiltern Hundreds (Stoke, Desborough and Burnham, and the Manor of Northstead) as offices of profit. A Member making application for the stewardship does, therefore, upon appointment by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, become disqualified for membership of the Commons.

The right to challenge the qualification of a Member to sit in the Commons is also retained. Application can be made to Her Majesty in Council seeking a declaration to that effect. A Judicial Committee examines the case and will refer it to the Courts for decision. Security for costs of the proceedings, not exceeding £200, is required.

Any person found to be elected to the Commons while disqualified is liable to have his election declared void; anyone becoming

disqualified while serving must vacate his seat.

The Bill, by amending the Parliamentary Election Rule regarding the candidate giving consent to nomination, places upon him full responsibility. It is now necessary for candidates, when giving consent, to declare that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they are not disqualified for membership of the House of Commons.

The Bill, quite wisely, makes provision for further changing circumstances. The First Schedule—which contains the disqualifying offices—can be amended by Order in Council, and thereby provides that elasticity so necessary in our present complex society.

CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates by the National Executive Committee recently:

Newbury	Mr. N. R. Longmate
Bebington	Mr. G. J. Oakes
Tiverton	Dr. J. E. O.
	Dunwoody
Hornchurch	Miss J. Richardson
Ilford North	Mr. C. F. H. Green
Woodford	Mr. A. C. Latham
Huntingdonshire	Mr. J. W. Fear
Preston North	Mr. A. Davidson
Holland with Boston	Mr. J. D. Williamson
Horncastle	Mr. H. W. Peck
Bridgwater	Mr. J. Finnigan
Chertsey	Mr. J. S. Barr
Merton & Morden	Mr. J. V. Strudwick
Arundel & Shoreham	Mr. A. L. Bell
Worthing	Mr. F. R. Mason
Solihull	Mr. R. P. Heaton
Westmorland	Mr. S. B. Welbon
Kidderminster	Mrs. J. Tomlinson
Sheffield, Heeley	Miss J. Mellors
Argyll	Mr. R. Young
East Fife	Mr. J. Nicol
Edinburgh North	Mr. G. Stott
Perth & East Perthshire	Mr. T. W. Moore
East Renfrewshire	Mr. A. J. Houston

WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

Tavistock	Mr. H. Lawrance
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The Art of Good Treasurership

TAKING charge of money belonging to other persons, or some organisation, is a thankless job, but a job which needs to be done with meticulous care.

Previous articles have stressed the importance of good relationships between officers. Goodwill and a good working arrangement between a secretary and treasurer are of particular importance.

It is impossible to lay down a rigid pattern in respect of the duties of these officers in the handling of money matters, as organisations vary so much in their administrative methods.

What is vital, however, is that there is a clearly defined division of duties, and arrangements made whereby the treasurer is in receipt of all monies due to him as quickly as possible.

There are some organisations whose methods of working result in secretaries receiving monies before they are handed over to the treasurer. Where this is the position arrangements should be made for a speedy transfer.

No Frustration

It is the treasurer who has to account for monies. He can become very frustrated if monies are withheld and he is unable to keep up to date with his records. In order to avoid such difficulties, which could lead to a great deal of bad feeling and misunderstanding between the secretary and treasurer, organisations are well advised to so arrange their business that all monies are paid direct to the treasurer.

On the other hand, the treasurer must ensure that he is not embarrassing the secretary by keeping him short of petty cash. The secretary should be provided with a petty cash book and receive cash in advance to meet whatever small expenses he incurs.

The treasurer has no right to expect the secretary to put his hand into his own pocket for money to pay for postage and other items. There must be a businesslike arrangement for the provision of petty cash.

During the course of the year a considerable amount of money can be spent in petty cash items and the treasurer is entitled to call upon the secretary to keep a detailed account. The petty cash book must go to the audit along with all the treasurer's books.

An organisation should ensure that a treasurer is supplied with adequate tools for the job. What are the minimum requirements?

1. A good cash analysis book.
2. A petty cash book for use of the secretary.
3. Numbered receipt books.
4. File (lever arch type preferred) for unpaid invoices.
5. File for receipted invoices.
6. Membership subscription book, unless this work is done in detail by the secretary or membership secretary. (Such records should also be sent in for audit.)

Must be Simple

The bookkeeping requisites of a Constituency Labour Party may be more elaborate than those required by a local Labour Party, Ward group, or Women's and Youth sections. Whatever method is adopted should be simple in character.

In the case of a constituency party, the treasurer would be well advised to keep an inventory, a Labour Party membership card record, and a literature record. Such additions to the routine records can be very valuable to a treasurer anxious to keep his eye on detail.

Books and records should be kept very neatly, though this does not mean there must be no alterations. The most expert bookkeepers can make mistakes. When they do, they do not attempt to obliterate the error, but make clear alterations and initial them. Errors can then be explained very easily to auditors.

When taking over a treasurership, it is wise to insist on giving a detailed receipt for all books, records, cash and bank balances received. The treasurer should keep a copy of this receipt. When he resigns or some other person is elected in his place, he should insist on receiving a receipt for all the records and balances he is handing over to the new treasurer.

This may seem an unnecessary precaution, but when dealing with the possessions and monies of an organisation, to use a well-known phrase, 'You can't be too careful.'

A good treasurer never relies upon his memory, however good it may be. He insists on keeping complete written records and keeping them up to date.

If he is wise he insists on making regular financial statements. He will ensure that members are aware of the financial position of the organisation, and are, therefore, sharing his responsibilities.

Have a Budget

His statements should not stop short at giving balances in hand, or deficits as the case may be. He should draw attention regularly to outstanding liabilities, and remind a meeting of heavy expenditure looming ahead. It is only by so doing that an organisation develops a sense of business responsibility.

A treasurer should also safeguard himself by insisting that all expenditures are authorised and recorded in the minutes. It is a very wise practice to draw up a budget of estimated income and expenditure at the beginning of each year.

Most organisations experience lean periods of income and should try as far as possible to regulate expenditure. This can only be done if a treasurer looks ahead and has the courage to say 'Whoa,' when financial matters appear to be getting out of hand.

However, that does not mean to say that we want a treasurer to out-'Midas' Midas. We have all met the over-zealous treasurer who seems to think once money is paid into the bank that it is never intended to take it out except for sheer necessities.

It is very nice to have a nest egg which will help out on a rainy day, and the anxiety of a treasurer to preserve this is very understandable. Nevertheless, if a party's finances are on a sound footing a treasurer should not urge preservation for preservation's sake, if by curtailing expenditure, vital activities are being curbed or neglected.

Bank Account

The mention of the word 'bank' brings us to another important aspect of treasurership. Every organisation, however small, should open a banking account and have a cheque book.

No organisation has a right to expect a treasurer to be its personal custodian. He must be able to pay all monies he has received into the bank without delay.

Furthermore, apart from petty cash items, the treasurer should insist on all accounts

being paid by cheque. This method acts as a safeguard for the treasurer and makes his task very much easier.

Then there is that important question of those little pieces of paper—receipts. A treasurer should not be worried about being called 'pernickety'; he must be insistent on detail for his own sake.

It is not always possible for small organisations to have receipt books specially printed, but certainly a Constituency Labour Party can have its own official receipt books printed and serially numbered. Even small organisations should always use numbered receipts.

The question of suspicion does not arise. A treasurer has a right to be protected, and numbered receipt books are among his best friends.

A treasurer should insist on issuing a receipt for every payment received and should issue this immediately money has been paid. It is no good putting it off—a receipt can so easily be forgotten.

Then we have all met with the 'hail-fellow-well-met' member who says airily, 'Oh, I haven't the time to wait, I trust you—a receipt doesn't matter.' Treasurers—refuse to be trusted—don't even trust yourselves. It is vital to issue that receipt there and then. Your auditors may not believe in the trusting theory.

A duplicated receipt book is better than the counterfoil type. You may easily miss some detail from the counterfoil.

Receipts Essential

Insist on receiving a receipt for all payments made. These inward receipts should be carefully filed and numbered for reference. The numbers of both incoming and outgoing receipts can be entered opposite the items they represent in the cash analysis book.

This may cause a little extra work but it ensures quick reference and will be of particular help to the auditors.

The financial year ends on December 31st and the treasurer should ensure that he is ready to close his books and be in a position to prepare for the audit as soon as possible.

If a treasurer has worked systematically throughout the year, preparations for the audit will present no difficulties.

It should be borne in mind that if auditors do their jobs properly, they will check up to the very day of the audit. Therefore, everything required for inspection by the auditors should be in readiness.

Auditors, in common with every member of an organisation, have many good reasons for being particularly grateful to a first-class treasurer.

Success in the village

IF I write about the Lydford local Labour Party, no one should jump to the conclusion that I think it's the best village Party in the country. *I don't.*

Nor do we claim in the Wells Constituency, to have solved all the problems of keeping Labour parties in widespread rural areas from collapse after a short initial burst of enthusiasm. *We haven't.*

But it's a good little party, and it's story contains several morals. So here goes!

Lydford is on the Fosse Way—don't confuse it with Lydford in Devon. The whole scattered parish contains not many above 300 souls, but there are two parsons to save them, for there's a church at East Lydford and another at West Lydford.

It all began with an open-air meeting in 1953, when David Llewellyn, our prospective candidate, was the speaker. While he gave his address I distributed literature and chatted with people at their doors.

Four or five gathered round the car. We said we would come and see them again. One seemed particularly interested.

Secretary Wanted

He was a road worker, employed by the Somerset County Council. It was him I saw on my subsequent visit, and explained our desire to form a small local committee to do some essential work for the Party. "If I can find a secretary, I can build a local Party," I said.

"See Mr. X," was his suggestion. But we fixed up a meeting in a supporter's house, anyway. Gilbert Carey, my roadman contact, offered to deliver the notices to the people he knew to be Labour.

I'd heard of Mr. X before. I told him what we hoped to do. He chatted about his experiences, his discussions, the farmers in the area. "Very Blue around here," he said. "No, you'll never get a party here."

I was disappointed. "Some of our supporters suggested you would make an ideal secretary," I struggled on. "Too busy," he responded. "Waste of time here."

I remarked that we must never give up

hope and must fight to break down the Tory influence in the countryside, hoped to see him at the meeting the next week anyway, and left.

When the meeting took place, there was Gilbert and one other chap waiting, and that was all. After 15 minutes I said, "Shall we knock up those who said they were coming and see if we can get some more here?"

So we all went out and called on those who had had notices. There were various excuses for not turning up, but in the end we mustered six supporters—but Mr. X was not among them.

Committee's Task

I explained what a small committee could do in a rural village. It could mark the register, trace removals, see to postal votes, distribute literature, and act as an election committee in election times. If support increased, some social activities might be tried, and I outlined our whist tournament which runs in the villages in the constituency.

"All we need is someone to act as secretary, and a chairman and treasurer. If you feel that you will have a go, I will come to your first three meetings." But who was to be secretary? Various names were suggested.

In the end I had to say to my roadman friend, "It looks as if it will have to be you, Gilbert, if you'll try it." He said he had never done anything like it before, was no scholar, but would do his best.

That was the beginning. At the next meeting we marked the register, checked lists B and C, and planned a qualifying whist drive—which, with some help from other parties, turned out a success.

How the party has developed can be shown by a picture of recent activities. Last August the annual outing took place, when members, families and friends went by coach to Weymouth. Before Christmas two whist drives were held, one being in aid of the annual children's and pensioners' party, and this produced over £10 profit.

No doubt about it, the Lydford Labour Party annual Christmas Party is one of the highlights of the year in the village. All children in the village are invited, and all

old age pensioners. They are given a fine tea, then games and entertainment follow. Both parsons attend.

And the result? Enhanced prestige and goodwill for the Labour Party in all the area. As one old age pensioner said at the last event, "The Tories don't do nothin' for you, here."

A qualifying whist drive is now planned and, later, some event to re-introduce David Llewellyn—once again our prospective candidate.

Beyond that, the party is effective in many ways. Its finances are sound—mainly because it participates regularly in the fund-raising activities of the constituency party. It contributes, apart from membership subscriptions, £5 to our quota scheme, each year.

It distributes literature, and when we ran our monthly paper, *Labour's Western Voice*, built up a regular sale. (Now that this journal is being revived on a new basis, as a West country paper, an order has been placed again.)

Lessons Here

Many such solid little village parties as Lydford exist, I know. But not so many that some of the lessons it has for us can be overlooked. And when I say "us" I mean all in the Party interested in organisation and the winning of not only the next election but also THE ONE AFTER THAT.

I think the first lesson is the value of ENTHUSIASM. Mr. X knows a lot about Socialism, theoretically, but wasn't prepared to work for it. If he *had* become the secretary I shouldn't have been able to tell him much about the job.

So we fell back on Gilbert Carey, road-worker, who had no secretarial experience but was *willing to try*. And when various suggestions have been put to Gilbert he has not responded with the know-all's motto,

"You can't do that there 'ere," but with a cheerful "We'll see what can be done about that."

Altogether, then, we need to cultivate that spirit of enthusiasm, of willingness to try. Secretaries and organisers need it; *but Party officers and members need it, too. They need to back up the efforts and ideas of their organisers with all they've got.*

Raise Funds

Next, I believe it is useless to start local parties in rural areas without giving them some idea how they can raise funds. When Lydford began the members took a lot of Christmas draw books and under our rebate system their party shared in the proceeds.

Very hesitantly the first qualifying whist drive was fixed: members would not have ventured on an ordinary drive, but being assured of support from outside the village, they went ahead, and succeeded. That gave them confidence.

From the *Voice* they got an idea of what other parties were doing, and that was how the plan for the annual Christmas Party came into being. I think there's a point here: in scattered areas especially, some means of letting members know what is happening in other areas is very helpful.

Lastly, there is another matter which is worthy of thought. The membership of this village party is not large, although it is growing this year. Yet it has been an *effective* party. It has done things. It has had a real impact on the community. It knows how to run an election.

And I am wondering if we ought to measure the success of our parties rather more by their activity, and impact upon the minds of the public, than by the mere number of cards issued . . .

Now there, indeed, is the subject for another article.

Finding members at work

IT is a source of wonder to me why we have such a poor record of membership in the industrial areas; I have heard the answer—it is all done through the union branches.

That may be true and we pay tribute to the work of the N.U.M. in this marginal seat, but the fact is that it is the individual members of the Party who do the routine

work at election times, and we always need more of them.

We have tried a new experiment in this constituency in recent months. It was suggested by two of our Deal councillors at a meeting last December and has now become a regular feature. Betteshanger Pit employs some 2,000 miners, most of whom are in the canteen on a Friday.

We have now established ourselves at the table next to the N.U.M. treasurer, and are

available for the enrolment of members, the collection of subs and the distribution and selling of literature.

Literature Distribution

First of all we carried out a systematic distribution of a localised edition of *Town and Country Post*. Then we did an all-out canvass from table to table, signing up the members and collecting 1s. 6d. We found that the new members came from every ward in Deal, from Dover, from the rural area, and even from outside the constituency.

On the first Friday we made 57 members in an hour. Some of whom paid up for the whole of the year. All the forms were taken back to the Party office.

Cards were made out for every member and the card money deducted. The balance was then sent to the Local Party secretary together with the membership form. A letter signed by the prospective Parliamentary candidate was sent to the new member together with his membership card. All this within the week, therefore he felt that he was not being neglected.

Now comes the point of the weekly two hours sitting at the N.U.M. table. Some of the newly-made members were not contacted for over a month by the local party or ward but, instead of their drifting away they have been able to come up and in no uncertain way make their grievance known to the agent. This means that the ward organisation concerned does keep up to scratch.

Elsewhere Too?

If this can be done (and there are plenty of flaws in the way we are doing it) in this county constituency covering three boroughs and two rural districts with 18 L.L.P.s, I can see no earthly reason why it cannot be done much easier in the strongholds of South Wales and the North where the membership is so low.

The whole system of collection could be organised in this way in many places, and except for the fact that the women would have to be contacted in some other way, I can see no rooted objection to it.

One point ought to be borne in mind by a colleague who wants to 'have a go' at this. Get the union on your side first and don't smack the posters up the first time that you go into the canteen. Use a little tact and get one or two of the 'old lads' on your side to go round with you. (This may mean buying

the odd cup of tea or the pint of beer.)

The 'Commos' will be very dodgy about the whole process, but make sure that you barge in the first time when they have a *Daily Worker* drive on. In which case you will be in the clear. I trust that no colleague will be so naïve as to say "Does the Board grant permission?" The answer is, "I expect so, but I haven't asked."

R. KNOWLES

New Agents

THE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee:

MR. E. C. PAIN to **Sevenoaks**. A book-binder by trade, 35 years of age, of Ipswich, Mr. Pain has been a member of the Party for 10 years. He has held offices as constituency party chairman and membership secretary. He has also been secretary of a Trades Council and of the Industrial Section of a joint Trades Council and Labour Party.

MR. W. A. MILLER to **Southwark**. Wilfred Miller has been a member of the Party for 10 years, during which time he has held various offices in Southwark. Aged 44, a clerk, Mr. Miller has acted as assistant to the agent at Parliamentary, L.C.C., and Borough Council Elections.

MR. P. A. JOLLY to **Birmingham Borough**. Aged 21, Patrick Jolly, recently demobbed from the Forces, has been appointed as organiser to Birmingham Borough Labour Party. He has been a Party member for five years and prior to his National Service was very active in the League of Youth in Devonport.

MR. E. SCOLTOCK to **Birmingham Borough**. An engineer, 40 years of age, Edgar Scoltock also has been appointed as organiser to the Birmingham Borough Labour Party. A member of the Party for 18 years he has held various offices locally, and for the past four years he has been election agent for his ward at local elections.

MR. R. P. BELBEN to **Ince**. Reg. Belben returns to Ince after a short spell at Wigan. A member of the Party for 36 years, he has been a full-time agent for 16 years, serving at Yardley, Halifax, Clitheroe, Banbury, Rossendale, Ince, and Wigan. He is 56 years of age.

ELECTIONS' LAW AMENDMENTS

Notification of Appointment of Election Agent

Page 9. Line 1. Delete 'R.O.' and insert 'Clerk'. This is necessary as Section 55(1), R.P.A. 1949 requires the notice of appointment of election agent to be submitted, in writing, to the 'appropriate officer'. The appropriate officer in local government elections is the clerk to the council for which the election is held.

In many local government elections no difficulty arises as the clerk to the council acts as returning officer, but this is not always so. For instance, in the case of county council elections it is usual to appoint the local clerk of the council as acting returning officer, but the notice of appointment has to be sent to the clerk to the county council.

In such cases a copy of the official notice should be sent to the acting returning officer for information.

Nomination Papers

Pages 17 and 18. Note 5. Line 1. Delete 'March' and insert 'February'.

This alteration is made necessary following the change of date for the publication of the Register of Electors—E.R.A. 1953 and Regulations.

Requirement of Secrecy

Page 23. Delete Note at bottom of page and insert:

'The candidate, election agent, candidate's wife or husband, or other persons permitted to be present at the count, can make their declarations of secrecy at any time prior to their attending the count. Polling and counting agents, however, must make their declarations of secrecy before the opening of the poll.'

'When a candidate and/or election agent intends to visit polling stations during the day, it will be necessary for them to make their declarations of secrecy before the opening of the poll.'

Absent Voters List

Page 27. After Regulation 26(4) insert: 'Regulation 26(5). As soon as practicable after the preparation of the absent voters list, the registration officer shall, on request and without fee, supply each candidate or his election agent, a copy of the absent voters list:

Provided that if such request is made before any issue of ballot papers to those entitled to vote by post, the registration officer shall supply a copy of the said list, or a copy of

Since the Labour Party publications 'Conduct of Local Elections' were published there have been minor, but quite important, changes in the law. The amendments to the 'Conduct of Local Elections (England and Wales)' are given herewith.

so much of the said list as relates to that issue, before that issue.'

The right to be supplied with a copy of the absent voters list (and list of postal proxies) was included in the R.P. Regulations of 1953.

When R.D.C. and P.C. Elections are taken together

Page 33. The Local Government Elections Act of 1956 provides for the simultaneous election of rural and parish councillors.

As from 1958 these two elections will be synchronised. In order to bring this into effect, a number of parish council elections will have to be deferred. For instance, where rural district council elections are held in May 1957, the parish council elections in that rural district will be deferred until 1960.

Many rural district councils have triennial elections, a majority of these are due in 1958.

Return of Election Expenses

Page 36. All reference to the 'R.O.' should be amended to read 'clerk to the council for which the election is held'.

In many cases the clerk to the council acts as returning officer, but not always—see notes re 'appointment of election agent'.

Payments with 28 days (excepting for Parish Elections)

Page 36. Lines 1 and 2. Delete 'not made in the' and insert 'made after that'.

Parish Elections. Return and Declaration (within 28 days)

Page 39. Line 6. Delete all after 'candidate'.

The Parish Council Election Rules, 1952, dispense with the necessity for candidates having to make declarations as to their election expenses before a Justice of the Peace.

The return and declaration is sent to the clerk to the rural district council.

Outside Bodies incurring Expenses

Page 41. Line 6. Delete 'R.O.' and insert 'clerk to the council for which the election is held'.

Return and Declaration by Body or Person

Line 2. Same deletion and insertion as above.

Election Agent's Return of the Expense

Line 1. Delete '(4)' and insert 'Section 69(2)'.

Line 3. Delete 'this section' and insert 'Section 63'.

Line 4. Delete '(5) Sub-section (1) of this Section' and insert 'Section 105 states that the provisions prohibiting payments, etc.'

Line 6. Delete 'this section' and insert 'Section 63'.

Contravention is an Offence

Line 1. Delete '(9)' and insert 'Section 63(5)'.

Absent Voters

Page 43. Line 4. Delete 'R.O.' and insert 'registration officer'. This will avoid confusing the returning officer with the registration officer.

Proxy Votes

Page 44. Add to third paragraph: 'A new form — R.P.F.10a — now combines R.P.F.7 and R.P.F.10'.

Votes at Local Elections

Page 45. Line 6. Delete 'November 20th' and insert 'October 10th'.

This correction is due to the alteration, in 1953, of the qualifying date for the registration of electors—E.R.A. 1953 and Regulations.

Exemption of Certain Shareholders

Page 52. Line 1. Delete '£200' and insert '£500'.

Line 4. Delete 'Section 131, L.G.A., 1948' and insert Sections 15, L.G. (Spec. Prov.) Act, 1953'.

Casual Vacancy. Election to fill Vacancy

Page 56. Lines 10 to 12. Delete paragraph and insert: 'When computing the 30 days it is necessary to exclude Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, bank holidays or days appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning, and the Saturday before and the Tuesday after Easter Day or Whit Sunday.'

Prior to the passing of the L.G.E.A. 1956 the 30 days were consecutive while the election timetable excluded the above days. Now they coincide.

A supplement to the 'Conduct of Local Elections (England and Wales)'; 'Conduct of Local Elections (Scotland)' and 'Conduct of

Local Elections (London)' has been published, making the necessary amendments in the law since the publication of these handbooks. The supplement is now available at the Labour Party Publications Department, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Single copies 6d. plus 3d. postage; 12 copies 6s., post free.

New Type Amplifier

—by R. HAYWOOD—

PYE Telecommunications Ltd. present a useful new type loudspeaker based on the old-fashioned megaphone we have all seen at one time or another. But no longer is a person with powerful lungs needed.

Just press the trigger, speak normally and your voice is carried up to 400 yards.

The Pye 'Transhailer' is a great advance in loud-hailing equipment, and although it has obvious limitations in use, there are many useful jobs it can cope with.

It is an electronic megaphone, and by using transistors, the little current-raising components which replace valves, the 'Transhailer' is extremely robust and fully portable. In normal use one set of batteries can be expected to last six months. This is the equivalent of 20,000 ten-second messages.

For advertising meetings, etc., it is ideal, and will completely eliminate the usual amplification set, with its cumbersome equipment and battery. Clearly, if used for long periods the snags become apparent: heavy load on the batteries, weight of the instrument, visual obstruction of the face of the person using the speaker.

For those who want it 'technical'—here it is: Power Output: 3 Watts at less than 10 per cent distortion. $3\frac{1}{2}$ Watts maximum. Range in Quiet Conditions: approximately 400 yards.

Batteries: 12 volts self-contained consisting of four cells Ever-Ready Type 1839 or equivalent, or eight cells Ever-Ready Type U11 or equivalent. Price 3s. 4d. per set of four. Average current consumption on speech: 120 mA. Battery life 12 hours of continual operation at a rate of 20 secs. on/20 secs. off. On average use of 10 secs. in the minute battery life of six months can be expected.

Dimensions: Length $15\frac{1}{4}$ in. (39.4 cm.). Diameter of flare $10\frac{1}{4}$ in. (26.67 cm.). Weight without batteries $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (1.93 Kg.). Weight with batteries 5 lb. (2.27 Kg.). Price £27.

PLANNING YOUR NEXT ELECTION

by J. W. Raisin

IN the conception of any campaign which, as in an election campaign, involves the deployment of men, materials and money, there must be a PLAN.

For lack of planning, battles have been lost; exploratory enterprises have met with disaster; Political Parties have gone down to defeat.

It is not suggested that planning alone ensures success; nor that success does not sometimes come despite the lack of adequate planning.

It is, nevertheless, wrong in every way to enter into any substantial undertaking without making a reasonable effort to assess the needs and the resources with which to meet them.

In elections it is, of course, for the agent to plan the campaign. Party workers are not normally expected to engage in this work, and the purpose of this article is not so much to provide instruction in this part of electioneering as to indicate the background against which all the subsequent activities will be seen.

A plan has several parts. First, it gives some sort of definition of the task to be performed. It is not enough to say: our plan is to win.

It is necessary to form as closely as possible an estimate of the number of votes we shall need in order to win (if, in fact, that is our actual objective in a particular case).

Then we shall have to estimate the resources available to us wherewith to meet the need.

Time Factor

At this point, in all planning, the time factor assumes enormous importance. We have to discover not only how much can be attempted but how much can be accomplished in the time available.

It is only when the planner has given thought to the above factors (the task to be performed and the time available for its execution) that he can usefully bring into consideration two further planning factors. These are, of course, personnel and finance.

The phrase 'to cut one's coat according to the cloth' is usually advanced as being sound common sense, but there is danger in think-

ing too exclusively along these lines. The implication is that, UNLESS the resources seen to be at hand are substantial, only a modest performance ought to be attempted.

This leaves out of consideration the question as to whether the resources available have been fully explored; and it also leaves out of consideration the extent to which people may respond to an inspiring lead.

The election planner sees all these things together. He sets his targets high, but not too high. He uses the time factor not only in measurement of the progress, but also as a stimulus in raising the tempo of the campaign.

Takes Count

He takes account of the number, experience and personal qualities of the people around him as factors determining not so much the amount to be done, as the manner and quality of its performance, including speed of operation.

In thinking about finance, he asks two questions: how much is he likely to get, and how much can this sum be best employed for the accomplishment of the task?

Agents are familiar with the forms which have been produced to assist them in this work of election planning.

- (1) *The Staff lay-out Form* shows the division of functions at the Central Committee Room and the assignment of officers at ward or polling district level. It is often possible, at some distance in time from the date of the election, to form a fairly good idea of the possible personnel at both constituency and ward level, but naturally nothing hard and fast will be done about this until the election is quite imminent.
- (2) *The Budget Form* enables the agents to apportion his available money (or what he may believe will be available) over the whole field of electioneering. The form, showing quantities as well as costs, relates to all the physical and material aspects of the campaign.
- (3) *The Time-Table Form*. This form combines the official time-table with that of the progress of the election. There is, of course, a connection between the dates for some of the official Acts and the issue of printed materials, etc. The use of this form helps the agent to calculate his printing and delivery dates and, in association with them, the dates for the

opening of Committee Rooms.

(4) *Estimation of the Vote Form.* In this form the agent breaks down his estimated vote requirement (and the associated canvass requirement) to ward and polling district level. This can be done with a very considerable degree of accuracy. It greatly assists him in the allocation of areas to individuals and in similar personnel matters to know just what any polling district or ward is required to produce in promises and/or votes if victory in the constituency is to be secured. It is also of the utmost value in assessing the rate of progress obtained during the actual campaign within the area concerned.

(5) *Canvass Summary Form.* This is merely a central summary of the Daily Return Forms (street lists by polling districts) made to the agent. By this form he is able to measure his canvass progress against the requirement.

In order that the agent may be able to devote his time and energy to the vitally important work of **PLANNING** and **PROGRESS**, he must have around him experienced, trained workers able to relieve him of detail, while at the same time carrying out their duties as part of a general scheme.

This article is intended to help all those who take a prominent part in the election to understand what is being done and why.

1

CONSTITUENCY

Central Committee Rooms.....

Election Agent.....

Telephone.....

CENTRAL COMMITTEE ROOM ORGANISATION

CANVASS ORGANISER	MEETINGS OFFICER	TRANSPORT OFFICER	OTHER SPECIALISTS

BRANCH COMMITTEE ROOM ORGANISATION (Whole Period)

[illegible]

1. PRINTING

Election Address	..	..	..
Election Special	..	..	..
Posters :			
(a) Hoardings	..	..	..
(b) Windows, etc.	..	..	..
Window Bills	..	..	..
Meeting Leaflets	..	..	..
Other Leaflets	..	..	..
Other items (named)	..	..	..
Reserve	..	..	..

Quantity	Approximate cost

2. STAFF :

Central (details)

Ward Units (number) :

(a) Whole Period	..	..	..
(b) Polling Day only	..	..	..

3. COMMITTEE ROOMS

(a) Whole Period	..	..	..
(b) Polling Day only	..	..	..

4. OTHER EXPENSES

Hire of Halls	..	..	..
Advertising :			
(a) Press	..	..	..
(b) Others	..	..	..
Stationery	..	..	..
Transport	..	..	..
Miscellaneous	..	..	..
General Reserve	..	..	..

TOTAL

ELECTION ENVELOPES

Can be supplied from stock at the following prices

9 in. × 4 in.

Under 10,000	.....	.....	19/3
10,000 — 24,000	.....	.....	18/6
25,000 — 49,000	.....	.....	18/-
50,000 — 99,000	.....	.....	17/6
100,000 — 249,000	.....	.....	17/2
250,000 and over	.....	.....	16/8

All prices are per thousand and include printing,
purchase tax and delivery



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